(Tripura), Passighat (Arunachal Pradesh), Rupsi and Shella (Assam), Sholapur (Maharashtra), and Vellore (Tamil Nadu).

(c) and (d) Airports are closed because none of the airlines are operating any flights to those locations. It is entirely for the airlines to decide whether they would operate their flights to any particular airport. Airports Authority will provide the necessary facilities for safe operation to such airports. During the last 3 years, four airports at Akola, Hubli, Kota and Gaya have been made operational.

Status of Jet Airways and Tata-Singapore Airlines

3189. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government did not allow the Tata-Singapore Airlines to operate in our domestic routes; and

(b) what is the status of Jet Airways via-a-vis Tata-Singapore Airlines with regards to foreign equity share?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) and (b) In accordance with the policy on domestic air transport service sector:

1. Foreign equity upto 40% and NRI/ OCB investment upto 100% would be permitted in the domestic air transport services.

2. Equity from foreign airlines will not be allowed directly or indirectly, in the domestic air transport services.

3. The existing companies operating in the domestic air transport sector in which equity is held by foreign airlines, directly or indirectly, will be advised to disinvest equity held by foreign airlines within a period of six months.

Since the proposal of M/s Tata Industries involved direct foreign equity participation of 40% by M/s Singapore Airlines, the proposal for grant of NOC to operate scheduled air transport services could not be considered.

Consequent to the approval of new policy, M/s Jet Airways, a scheduled domestic private airline has also been advised to take immediate measures for disinvestment of 40% equity held by foreign airlines (20% each by M/s Gulf Air and M/s Kuwait Airways) within six months.

Passenger carriage growth of IA

3190. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the growth in passenger carriage in 1996-97, registered by Indian Airlines;

(b) similar growth figures for 1994-95 and 1995-96;

(c) what steps have been taken to increase passenger carriage growth of IA; and

(d) the decline in vacant passenger capacity carried by IA over the years since 1994-95?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) and (b) The growth in passenger carriage registered by Indian airlines and Alliance Air during the years 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 were—3.2%, 1.3% and 5.4% respectively.

(c) Indian Airlines has taken various steps in areas like product improvement, commercial initiatives and passenger facilitation to increase its passenger carriage growth.

(d) The details of the seat factor of